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# Fitness and Amateur Sport

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# **Fitness and Amateur Sport**

*Prepared in the  
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The Fitness and Amateur Sport Act was passed in 1961 to encourage, promote and develop fitness and amateur sport in Canada. It provided for the establishment of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate within the federal Department of National Health and Welfare and for the appointment of a National Advisory Council to study the fields of fitness and amateur sport and to advise the Minister on matters relating to the development of those areas.

The 1969 *Task Force Report on Sport for Canadians* recommended more government assistance to both sport and physical recreation in Canada. Sport was viewed as an important element of Canadian culture, requiring and deserving public support. Ensuing policy papers stressed the need to develop excellence in competitive sports by means of increased participation.

As a result of these new policies and the federal determination to provide stronger leadership, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate was reorganized. To handle growing responsibilities, two program directorates were set up. Sport Canada was to concentrate on improving competitive ability at the national and international levels. Recreation Canada (now Fitness and Recreation Canada) was to be concerned with encouraging Canadians to take part in sport and physical recreation.

A further consequence of the new policies was the establishment of four "spin-off" organizations. The National Sport and Recreation Centre was created to provide office space and administrative services for national sport and recreation associations. Hockey Canada was set up to organize and manage Canada's national hockey teams, to co-ordinate their participation in international competition and to encourage the development of the sport in Canada. The purpose of the Coaching Association of Canada was to increase coaching effectiveness in all sports and to provide programs and services for coaches at all levels. Finally, Sport Participation Canada, popularly known as "ParticipAction", was created as a private non-profit organization to promote the fitness of Canadians through participation in sport and physical recreation.

This important period of development also saw the inauguration of several national projects within the Fitness and Amateur Sport Program. The national, multi-sport Canada Games have been held every two years since 1967, alternately in winter and in summer. The cross-Canada Sports Demonstration Project set out on the first of many tours of Canadian communities. The Canada Fitness Award Program was launched in the schools. Grants-in-aid were awarded to student athletes. Game

## **Fitness and Amateur Sport Program**

Plan, designed to bolster preparation for the Olympic Games, provided special assistance to Canada's world-ranked athletic talent in the Olympic disciplines. The Arctic Winter Games were conceived as a social and cultural as well as athletic gathering for the inhabitants of the Arctic.

By 1973, the Directorate had been elevated to branch status under its own Assistant Deputy Minister and the Program had been transferred to the health side of the Department, in recognition of its comprehensive "lifestyle" orientation.

In 1976, the first Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport was appointed.

### *Aims*

The principal purpose of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch is to raise the fitness levels of Canadians and improve their participation in physical recreation and amateur sport. To this end, the Branch pursues three subordinate aims:

- (1) to increase the appreciation for and understanding of fitness, physical recreation and amateur sport;
- (2) to assist, co-operate with and enlist the aid of groups interested in furthering the development of fitness, physical recreation and amateur sport;
- (3) to improve the quality of participation by Canadians in physical recreation and amateur sport.

The Branch pursues its twin goals of fitness and mass participation in sports, on the one hand, and excellence in sports, on the other, chiefly by means of financial contributions and a variety of consultative services.

## Sport Canada

Sport Canada administers programs designed to improve the quality and broaden the scope of Canadian participation in amateur sport. A major part of its budget goes to strengthen the national sport-governing bodies and related agencies:

- (1) Resource development —  
clinics, conferences, courses and certification programs for officials and coaches;  
salaries and travel expenses of full-time administrative coaching and technical staffs of national associations;  
upgraded facilities resulting from major sports events held in Canada;  
support for the National Sport and Recreation Centre, the Coaching Association of Canada and Hockey Canada.
- (2) Training —  
Game Plan, under which special assistance is provided in the areas of talent-identification, training and help with living expenses for carded athletes of world rank and expanded opportunities for training-camps, coaching and competition;  
grants-in-aid to student athletes in sports not covered by Game Plan;  
international sport exchanges.
- (3) Competition —  
travel and living expenses of athletes and officials at national trials and championships, world championships and other major international events such as the Commonwealth, Pan-American and Olympic Games; support for the Canada Winter and Summer Games, the Arctic Winter Games and international competitions held in Canada.
- (4) Communications —  
conferences and seminars related to Canadian sport development;  
Game Plan Promotion Unit, by which biographical and statistical data are compiled and distributed to inform the media about athletes and sport events;  
planning, administrative and technical meetings.



## Fitness and Recreation Canada

Fitness and Recreation Canada supports programs for the encouragement of a healthy "lifestyle" for all Canadians through an appreciation of the nature and benefits of fitness activities and increased participation in physical recreation. Such activities range from simple exercise programs, suitable to an individual's personal needs and physical limitations, to mass leisure participation in a sport or recreational pursuit.

- (1) Resource development —  
development and operation of recreation programs, leadership clinics and seminars;  
support of national associations for the physically-disabled;  
salaries and travel expenses of full-time executive and technical staff of national associations;  
contributions to provincial and territorial native peoples' organizations and to *métis* and other groups to develop sport and recreation programs that enable them to compete in the general Canadian sport arena.

- (2) Communications —  
support of ParticipAction as a promotional vehicle to educate and motivate Canadians to become more physically active;  
the Canadian Home Fitness Test, a simple, safe, self-administered test of cardio-respiratory fitness;


employee-fitness programs, designed to implement and measure the effects of a fitness and "lifestyle" intervention program;  
sport and recreation facility studies;  
wilderness fitness trails;  
an "exercise break", set to music, produced as an aid to leaders and health professionals to introduce the benefits of physical activity into places of work and educational and other institutions;  
recreation-development conferences;  
the Canada Fitness Award Program for boys and girls from seven to 17;  
the Sports Demonstration Project, for people of all ages, which travels to communities across the country to encourage mass involvement in sport and recreation activities of all kinds.



### *The future*

In an attempt to formulate future policies in their respective areas, both Sport Canada and Fitness and Recreation Canada have recently gone through a process of consultation with provincial and territorial governments, national sport and recreation associations and other interested individuals and groups. Major discussion documents were produced proposing national policies on amateur sport and recreation in Canada.

While the programs supported by Sport Canada continue to concentrate on the high-performance, or élite, athlete, and on coaching and technical development, and while those supported by Fitness and Recreation Canada continue to aim at equal access and opportunity for all, it is expected that greater emphasis will henceforth be placed on sport and physical activity for the school-age child.



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